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LATIN PATRIARCHATE
OF JERUSALEM

Meditation of Patriarch Pizzaballa: Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, Year B, 2021

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In meditating on the Gospel of this feast of the Most Holy Trinity, we dwell briefly on two very short particles, two simple prepositions. The first is the preposition “in”, and we find it in verse 19: “baptizing them in the name of the Father …”. Whereas, the second is “with”, and we find it at the end of today’s passage, in verse 20: “I am with you …”. It is by means of these two words that we enter today’s celebration, seeking, through them, to contemplate the new life that Jesus brought to earth, but which, even before, is lived within the relationship of the Trinity. Jesus meets His disciples in Galilee after the resurrection. There He takes leave of them to return to the glory of the Father, but He does so only after giving them a mandate, an absolutely new mission: “Go, therefore, make disciples of all peoples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son. and of the Holy Spirit “(Mt 28, 18-19). The mission has something paradoxical: Jesus has eleven people in front of Him, eleven simple and mostly illiterate people, and sends them all over the world to proclaim the faith to all peoples. There is an obvious disproportion between the poverty of those sent and the immensity

of the mission. But the paradox is not just this. The paradox is that this new faith is not a new ethics, a new law to be observed, but it is being immersed (this means to baptize) in the life of another, in the life of God. What does it mean? The Easter time, which ended with Pentecost, presented us with chapters 15-17 of the Gospel of John: and there, repeatedly, Jesus used this image, of living in each other: the branch in the vine , Jesus in the Father, we in Him. The old life is a life in which each one remains in himself, closed in his own solitude, in his own individuality; good things can even be done, deep intuitions can even be had; but one remains within the boundaries of one's self. On the contrary, the new life is a life in each other, a life that creates a sense of mutual belonging so profound that one can no longer live without the other: the life of one becomes the life of the other. It can be a faint image for us because, in our experience, we are only used to living side by side, if not against each other. But Baptism engages us in this totally new experience, wherein we are not able to give ourselves on our own: it is the fruit of Easter, the new thing that the Spirit accomplishes in us, as a new creation. The experience of truly rediscovering oneself only in the relationship with the other. Yet even this does not exhaust the paradoxical scope of this verse: the life in which all peoples can be immersed is the relationship of three persons, or, the love with which they love each other. New life will consist in being immersed in this love, in this life; it will be living in their space, in their love, in their thoughts, in them: the Father with the Son and the Spirit. And here we come to the second preposition: with. The new life, in which we will be immersed, is a life 'with'. 'With' is the preposition that stands before all the words that speak company, communion, sharing…; and it is the preposition that tells a way of life in which one is not alone. The life in which we are immersed, in which we live, is a life of communion and love. God refuses to be separated, and always chooses unity. He lives communion within His relationships, and equally lives it outside, with His creation, with which He remains in communion, at any cost. The Incarnation is the fruit of this style, of His way of being, which leads it to be God with us. And so Pentecost, as the only possible way for God to stay with us. So, it is this that we are baptized, immersed in; it is what we receive as a gift on the day of our baptism, and which then flourishes in life through the many pentecosts that we are given to experience. The only thing that is asked of us is to deny in us an entire way of thinking about life in which one seeks only to control, defend, and save the boundaries of one's own self, as an absolute. Welcome being consecrated in unity and love, because only this is real life! +Pierbattista